Upper Little Deschutes Restoration Project EA

Draft Fuels Input – Kathy Enna, Assistant FMO (Fuels)

March 29, 2018

The Upper Little Deschutes project area is made up predominantly of lodgepole pine with some mixed ponderosa pine and a number of riparian and/or wetlands throughout. Dead and down debris can be found throughout the area as well. In the last 20 years there has been one large fire accounting for 1% of the total project area. This fire was caused by a camp fire. In previous years around 30 % of the planning area was treated with PCT /underburning/thinning.

The purpose of this project is restoration related: 1) maintaining or restoring the existing values and ecosystem services that a riparian environment provides through improving the hydrological function of the Little Deschutes River to benefit the unique habitats found adjacent to the river. 2) Maintaining or enhancing recreational experiences of hunting, fishing, and camping, with a sustainable road system that provides access while increasing wildlife security and reduces sedimentation to the river.

Direct and Indirect Effects

This project intends to decrease the amount of lodgepole pine throughout the project and decrease the number of dispersed campsites throughout. The proposed actions for this project include:

- Riparian enhancement and restoration; the actions listed will have no adverse effects on fuels.
- Sustainable recreation would provide recreational opportunities while reducing impacts to riparian and sensitive upland wildlife habitat. The action of closing dispersed campsites could lessen the threat of fire do to campfires. The other actions would have no effect on fuels.

Sustainable transportation creates a road system that provides public access throughout the planning area, provides for appropriate access to private lands. Fire and emergency ingress and egress, while increasing wildlife security and reducing the resource damage, vegetation removal, and sedimentation into the river. Closing roads has the potential to effect firefighting efforts, making it harder to access potential fires sooner by not possibly being able to drive to the fire but instead hike into the fire. This effect is small so will not affect fire and fuels.

Cumulative Effects

This project overlaps:

- BLT EIS (2008). The Timber Sales are completed in this area and remaining work is maintenance work associated with fuels reduction. This work may consist of Mowing/Mastication or Prescribed under burning to maintain the desired condition. This area is within the wild land urban interface.

- Rim Paunina EIS (2012) is still being implemented. Rim Paunina units 3010 and 115 are separated form the south and southeast corner of the ULDR project area by 0.15 miles. Some effects maybe overlapping. Effects that will be over lapping are from underburning. Underburning may cause smoke that would affect the ULDR project area. As per policy, Smoke management guidelines will be followed during all burning operations.

Project design features

If there are any residual fuels, such as limbs and slash, left after project completion these fuels may be piled for burning in areas approved by the district archeologist, wildlife specialist and soil specialist.

In some instances lop and scatter may be considered. Lop and scatter will not be bed of continuous fuel (unbroken fuel arrangement) with fine fuels (less than a quarter inch in diameter) and 10 hour fuels (.25 to 1 inch in diameter) or combination of the two exceeding 3 inches in depth. If the residual fuel to be left meets the criteria stated previous that material is to be piled for burning in approved areas.